

**University of South Carolina Lancaster**  
**Act 629 Summary Report on Institutional Effectiveness**  
**Fiscal Year 2002-2003**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

USC Lancaster works to help its pre-baccalaureate students attain skills and attributes in the areas of communication, critical thinking, cultural literacy, and personal development. Students in the two-year occupational programs focus on those areas most appropriate to their professional education program, with the goal of achieving the following outcomes (which may be viewed online at <http://usclancaster.sc.edu/acadstu/GEG.htm>).

**Communication Skills**

USC Lancaster helps its students read effectively and attain a basic familiarity with the basic texts of Western and other cultures. In the area of writing skills, USC Lancaster students work to develop the ability to write effectively for both academic and professional audiences. In addition, USC Lancaster helps its students learn to listen critically and speak effectively before a group.

**Critical Thinking**

USC Lancaster helps its students acquire analytical reasoning abilities and exercise informed value judgments. USC Lancaster students also work to develop mathematical and/ or computational skills.

**Cultural Literacy**

USC Lancaster strives to give its students an understanding of the history and culture of Western civilization as well as provide some exposure to other cultures. USC Lancaster also recognizes the centrality of science and technology to modern culture; therefore, USC Lancaster students also are offered opportunities to increase their understanding and familiarity in these crucial subject areas.

**II. STUDENT DEVELOPMENT**

USC Lancaster supports the intellectual, personal, physical, and social development of students, in recognition of the critical interdependency of all these areas. By providing opportunities for productive interaction with students, faculty, and staff, USC Lancaster helps students develop a spirit of curiosity, integrity, and confidence in planning and pursuing academic, career, and personal goals.

Because of turnover in the position of Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs in 2002, USC Lancaster's assessment processes underwent some transition during the course of the academic year. Efforts were made, both formally and informally, however, to assess the institution's effectiveness in terms of its academic programs as well as extracurricular activities, with the goal of enhancing overall student development. As a commuter campus, special effort was made to offer more extracurricular activities in order to keep students on campus and to create more of a traditional "collegiate" atmosphere.

**A. Student Orientation**

The transition to the University environment is a major change for all students. This is especially true, however, for the first-generation college student who cannot draw on the experiences of his or her parent(s) for reassurance and guidance. Because many who enroll at USC Lancaster are first-generation college students, the campus sponsors three Orientation sessions during the summer for both students and parents, in order to make them more familiar and comfortable with the campus and the wide variety of services available.

During the summer of 2002, surveys were given to students at the July and August sessions. The results were as follows:

<b>Question #1</b>	<b>July, 2002</b>	<b>August, 2002</b>
What was the best part of Orientation?	Lunch/food (28%) Meeting New People (24%) Campus Tour (23%) Social Barometer Exercise (12%)	Meeting New People (35%) Campus Tour (29%) Lunch/food (22%) Campus presentations (14%)
<b>Question #2</b>	<b>July, 2002</b>	<b>August, 2002</b>
What was the worst part of Orientation?	Campus presentations (19%) Testing (19%) College student Inventory (9%) Having to Sit for Long Periods (9%) Campus Tour/Heat (8%)	Campus Presentations (29%) Testing (25%) College Student Inventory (12%) Having to Sit for Long Periods (11%)
<b>Question #3</b>	<b>July, 2002</b>	<b>August, 2002</b>
Do you feel more confident about attending USCL now that you have completed Orientation?	Yes (91%) No (3%) Maybe/Not Sure (5%)	Yes (82%) No (12%) A little (5%)

Survey results indicate student satisfaction with most parts of the Orientation session, particularly in regards to its impact on student confidence regarding attending USC Lancaster. An additional question was included asking for suggestions for improvement in the program. The vast majority of suggestions involved the length of the program, with students expressing an overwhelming desire for shorter sessions. Other suggestions included the addition of activities that allow for more student interaction with USCL personnel.

## **B. Other Extracurricular Events**

Throughout the year, the Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs met regularly with the Director of Student Life to discuss already-scheduled events and to plan for future ones. Regularly-sponsored annual events included the Back-to-School Blast held in September 2002, where faculty, staff, and students gathered for a meal and games (e.g., volleyball, Frisbee, etc.). Two local bands, with members who are USCL students, also played for the event. In April, the campus hosted its annual "Spring Fling" event, which also included a cookout. This year's theme centered around the Caribbean and included a limbo contest, a student sidewalk art contest (judged by a panel comprised of faculty, staff, and students), and a hula-hoop contest. Both of these events were well-attended and informal interviews with members of the SGA and other student representatives indicates that they were viewed as positive experiences by our students.

Throughout the year, USCL also hosted a number of smaller events. Most of these were cookouts or "pizza parties," as experience has demonstrated that offering food ensures a greater degree of participation by students, faculty, and staff. The USCL Student Government Association also purchased a karaoke machine in 2002 which has been used at the various events to provide students, faculty, and staff with the opportunity to display their vocal talents (or lack thereof, in some of our cases).

Before and after each event, the Associate Dean for Academic & Student Affairs and the Director of Student Life have met to discuss the events. The underlying philosophy of these events has been, and continues to be, to provide students with the opportunity to interact with each other as well as with USCL

faculty and staff, in a non-academic setting, and to provide a greater sense of a “collegiate community” on this regional (commuter) campus.

In order to more precisely measure the effect of these events on student development, the Associate Dean and the Director of Student Life have scheduled a meeting with the Director of the University 101 program at USCL to discuss how we might utilize those classes to provide a representative sampling of students to survey. These will indicate to us the relative participation rate of students in extracurricular activities, as well as the overall satisfaction level attained by those who attend such events.

The USCL Opportunity Scholars Program sponsored a number of “Round Table” discussions during 2002-2003, where faculty and staff were invited to have luncheon with students and to talk about selected topics. These informal meetings are designed to allow students to see faculty and staff members in settings outside the traditional classroom, and to allow for a greater degree of interaction between them than might normally be achieved in the regular classroom.

### **C. Cultural Literacy**

As one of its student development goals, USC Lancaster attempts to introduce its students to a wide variety of cultural activities. The vast majority of our students are local residents, and most have never traveled any great distance. A number of events were scheduled during 2002-2003 designed to add to the cultural richness of student experiences on our campus:

Professor Walt Collins, instructor of French & English, sponsored a French film series. This series included four films that were shown on campus during National French Week (11 – 14 November, 2002). Combined attendance over the four nights was sixty-six (66).

Professor Bruce Nims, professor of English, sponsored and administered the Medford Library Poetry Contest, which allowed USCL students to enter their own creative works for judging. He also organized the Freshman Reading Experience, with all English 102 students at USCL reading from *Inheritance: Selections from the South Carolina Fiction Project* and included a special presentation by USC Writer-In-Resident Janet Turner Hospital. In February, 2003, Professor Nims was also instrumental in bringing to campus Dr. Kwame Dawes, associate professor of English at USC Columbia, poet, and internationally recognized expert on reggae music. Dr. Dawes provided a poetry reading and book-signing session on campus on a Friday, as well as an all-day poetry writing workshop which was open to USCL students, faculty, staff, and the general public.

Professor Fran Perry, assistant professor of art, sponsored a number of art exhibits on campus during 2002-2003. Utilizing her own art, as well as that of other artists – both locally and nationally renown – she provided students with the opportunity to view artistic works which they would otherwise not have the opportunity (or, in many cases, the inclination) to see. For many of these shows, the artist or artists came to campus and gave a short lecture or presentation about his/her art. These lectures were open to the general public as well.

For 2003-2004, Professors Perry and Collins, as well as Professor Darris Hassell (instructor of Spanish), are planning a two-week student/faculty trip to Italy, southern France, and Spain, to allow students the opportunity to experience these cultures first-hand.

### **D. Alumni Survey**

In 2002-2003, USCL began administering an on-line survey of alumni to ascertain the success of its overall program. While many of the questions were generic in nature and common to all of the University's regional campuses, USCL's survey was altered slightly to include questions about the programs unique to this campus. The results were as follows:

## ALUMNI SURVEY RESULTS

### 1. Indicate how satisfied you are with various aspects of your undergraduate experience at USC Lancaster.

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Your <b>major</b> program of study	7	10	1	1	0
<b>Instruction</b> in your major	10	7	1	1	0
Your <b>general education</b> program of study (non major degree requirements)	8	10	1	0	0
<b>Instruction</b> in your general education program	8	9	2	0	0
Your <b>overall</b> academic experience	10	8	1	0	0

### 2. Indicate how frequently you are involved in each of the following types of activities.

	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Less	Never
Career-related advanced education or training	5	3	5	6	0
"Lifelong learning"/personal enrichment studies outside you career areas(s)	2	4	5	4	4
Professional or service organization	5	2	3	6	3
Volunteer, public or community service	3	7	4	4	2
Social/recreational organization	5	3	4	6	1
Support or participation in the arts	3	3	6	3	3

### 3. Indicate the extent your college experience influenced your participation in the activities listed in Question 2.

	Strongly	Moderately	Somewhat	None at all
Career-related advanced education or training	5	8	5	3
"Lifelong learning"/personal enrichment	7	5	2	4
Professional or service organization	5	5	4	5
Volunteer, public or community service	5	3	5	5
Social/recreational organization	4	4	6	4
Support or participation in the arts	4	5	3	6

### 4. Please check the *best response* : Since leaving USC Lancaster, I have voted \_\_\_\_ of the elections.

All: 4	Most: 5	Some: 4	A Few: 0	None: 6
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### 5. How long did it take you to obtain your first full-time job after graduation?

Obtained job prior to leaving college	9	7-12 months	0
Less than one month	3	More than twelve months	1
1-3 months	2	Have not obtained a full-time job	3
4-6 months	0	Did not seek a full-time job	1

**6. Please indicate the relationship between your undergraduate major and your work, for both your first job after graduation and, if applicable, your current position.**

	Highly Related	Moderately Related	Slightly Related	Not Related	Never/Not Employed
First job after graduation	5	6	1	3	3
Current position	5	6	5	5	1

**7. Please indicate the location of your first job after graduation and your current position.**

	South Carolina	Southeast, outside of South Carolina	Outside the Southeast	Never/Not Employed
First job after graduation	13	3	0	3
Current position	13	4	0	1

**8. Indicate which of the following best describes your activities six months after graduation from USC Lancaster and currently (Check all that apply).**

	Six months after graduation	Currently
Continuing your education full-time	7	4
Employed and continuing your education	9	5
Employed full-time	8	8
Employed part-time	8	5
Self-employed (farm or business owner, etc.)	2	2
Serving in the Armed Forces	0	0
Caring for a home/family	6	7
Unemployed - seeking work	0	0
Unemployed - not seeking work	1	1
Other:	0	0

**9. As they relate to your current employment or post-graduate education, how well did your experiences at USC Lancaster prepare you in the following ways?**

	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Inadequate	Not Sure
Oral communication	8	10	1	0	0
Use of computers and technology	8	8	1	1	0
Math and data interpretation	4	7	6	0	0
Problem solving	5	9	0	0	0
Workplace diversity	7	6	3	0	2
Interpersonal skills	7	8	2	1	0

**10. Did the knowledge and skills you acquired at USC Lancaster prepare you for the job market?**

Yes: 12	No: 3	Not Sure: 3
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**11. Rate the overall quality of your USC Lancaster education.**

Above Average: 10	Average: 7	Below Average: 1	Not Sure: 0
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**12. How long was it before obtaining your job following graduation?**

Prior to leaving college	10	Less than one month	2
1 to 3 months	3	4 to 6 months	0
7 to 12 months	0	Over 12 months	0
Have not obtained fulltime job	2	Did not seek fulltime job	0
Decided to further my education	1		

**13. What is your ethnic background?**

American Indian/Alaskan Native	0	Hispanic	2
Asian or Pacific Islander	0	Multi-racial	0
Black/African American	1	White/Non-Hispanic	0

**14. What is your gender?**

Female: 13

Male: 5

**USC Lancaster Alumni Results****Comments**

It might be beneficial for the older students to have a beginning computer class for those who have never worked on computers. I know that was really a struggle for me. Thanks!

I loved USCL. The professors are wonderful and all the staff is supportive. USCL prepared me for USC Spartanburg, where I obtained my Bachelor of Science in Psychology. Now I am working full-time, but searching for a graduate school. I owe all my appreciation to you, USCL. I thank you for accepting me. I give you all my appreciation. Thank you dearly for my education!

All the instructor were really helpful. They all seemed to have a genuine concern for the students.

Thank you for your interest in m opinion. Please feel free to contact me in the future. Sincerely, Krystan Simpson Helms

I'm not a US citizen yet, therefore I cannot vote. Please develop more music, art and cultural programs. Find a way to work with the School District to find a way to help High School Hispanic students to further their college studies.

While the survey is relatively new to our campus and response has not been overwhelming, those who have responded have demonstrated a high degree of satisfaction with their overall educational experience at USC Lancaster. The campus will use this data, as well as that accumulated by other instruments, to refine and make adjustments to the current methods it employs to supplement student growth and development in order to help achieve the Renaissance ideal of the "well rounded" individual.

### **Policies and Procedures to Ensure that Academic Programs Support the Economic Development Needs in the State by Providing a Technologically Skilled Workforce**

General education goals of USC Lancaster graduates include competencies in communication skills (written and oral), critical thinking (including mathematical and/or computational skills), cultural literacy (including skills in science and technology), and student development. These goals are met within individual classes across the curriculum. As well, each degree program requires successful completion of classes that specifically address the listed competencies. Students at USC Lancaster are helped to achieve the fundamental skills, knowledge, and capacity for critical thought necessary to pursue further learning, to succeed in their chosen fields, and to assume the responsibilities of informed and enlightened citizenship in their communities and in the wider society.